Tips for Preparing a Successful 21st CCLC Application

The bottom line:
- Programs must serve the neediest students
- The framework for 21st Century Learning must drive programming decisions
- Program directors, site leaders, and instructors must have clear expectations and adequate funding to lead an exemplary program

First Steps:
- Read the Montana 21st CCLC Request for Proposal document
- Read the original 21st Century Federal Bill Text
- Read the 21st Non-Regulatory Guidance
- Read the OPI Guidance
- Read the e-grant sample

Planning:
21st CCLC programs are developed and implemented as partnerships between schools and community organizations and/or individuals who want to change the lives of students. The following steps will greatly increase your chances of success:
- Organize multiple planning meetings to prepare the application
- Survey students, parents, and other stakeholders
- Involve key players from the school, community organizations and surrounding community in the planning process
- Allow plenty of time to prepare your proposal carefully and thoughtfully. Do not rush through the process

Writing Tips:
General Presentation:
Use plain English. If you cannot make a point in less than 35 words, the point needs to be rethought.

Narrative:
Structure your narrative by answering each question from the grant section within the required character limit.

Common omissions:
- Statistical data to back assertions
- Evidence of planning meetings and community input
- Overview of existing programs, including program name, program site, numbers served before 21st CCLC application
- Projected numbers to be served with 21st CCLC program and an explanation of the nature of expansion, if any
- Program detail: numbers of students served, regular attendees, schedules, days, offerings, sites, ratios, curriculum, rationale, staffing configurations

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Budget:

All costs must be *reasonable* and *necessary* to carry out your project. Be specific about how the funds will be used and link them clearly to your program narrative.

- Make sure costs for administration and direct instruction are balanced
- Include specific details in the budget narrative for each section such as FICA and other benefit costs, hourly wages, and number of contract days
- Budget for a minimum of two hours of program time per day
- Budget to offer programs at least 4 days per week, preferably 5 days a week
- Do not request funds for "miscellaneous" or other purposes using vague language
- Do not request funds for anything that is not directly related to the 21st Community Learning Centers program described in the narrative
- Do not request funds for construction projects

Other Steps:

- Prepare all text in a Word document prior to entering into e-grants
- Proofread your proposal. Ask colleagues who have not been involved in the proposal's development to proofread the proposal
- Reviewers will not give your proposal the benefit of the doubt if information is missing, spelling errors change the meaning of sentences, or information is presented in a confusing manner
- Check your budget figures for consistency and accuracy
- Submit your proposal by the deadline date

REGARDING PLAGIARISM:

When submitting a grant proposal into the e-grants system be assured that:

- The work product in the grant application is the original work of the district/applicant and its agents who worked on the application
- If a discovery of plagiarism is made known or brought to the attention of officials at the Office of Public Instruction(OPI) during a current grant competition, then at the discretion of the OPI, the department has the right to remove the grant application for funding consideration because of the occurrence of cause
- Plagiarism of the work of another person or entity could result in a private cause of action against the undersigned and/or the undersigned's employer

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